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SUBJECT: LAUNCHING OF ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING LAW

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¶1. On July 28, 2009, the Zambian Minister of Home Affairs launched the Anti-Human Trafficking Law of 2008, this makes Zambia one of three SADC countries to enact such a law. Zambia recognizes the high threat human trafficking poses to marginalized citizens. In 2007, the International Labor Organization (ILO) conducted a study on Child Trafficking in Zambia, which reported Zambia is a source, transfer point, and destination country for human trafficking within the region.

¶2. Amending the penal code to prosecute perpetrators in 2005 was the Government of Zambia's (GRZ) first response to human trafficking. The GRZ took action again in September 2008, when the Zambian Parliament enacted Act 11 of 2008, otherwise known as Anti-Human Trafficking Act, 2008. The Act drew heavily from the 2003 United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children to develop clear-cut guidelines for widespread implementation, prosecution, and prevention in rural and urban areas. The Act requires a Human Trafficking Committee to establish national strategies against trafficking, work with ministries and NGOs, and advise ministers on related policy matters. The committee includes one representative from the following five ministries: Labor and Social Security; Gender and Women in Development; Sport, Youth and Development; Home Affairs; and Health. The Anti-Human Trafficking Act of 2008 also supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, credited for defining human trafficking.

¶3. The Anti-Human Trafficking Act institutes penalties, ranging from 15 years to life imprisonment, and sends strong messages to parents, as courts may suspend parental/guardian rights if trafficking suspected. Under the Act, government ministries are responsible for developing adult and children victim centers to provide counseling, rehabilitation, and education. The Ministry of Home Affairs must introduce public awareness programs to promote citizens' rights and publicized recruitment tactics commonly used by traffickers. If enforced, the Act could make major strides in reducing organized crime's prevalence in Zambia. There is no indication, however, that additional resources were made available for adequate enforcement in Zambia's current fiscal year (1/1/09 - 12/31/09).

BOOTH